

**Notice of Allowability**

Application No.

10/789,985

Examiner

Leslie A. Nicholson III

Applicant(s)

HAYASHI ET AL.

Art Unit

3651

**-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--**

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to emailed proposed amendments 9/20/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1,3-8,10-20,22-25.
3. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
  - a) ☒ All   b) ☐ Some\*   c) ☐ None   of the:
    1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
    2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
    3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* Certified copies not received: \_\_\_\_\_.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.  
**THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.**

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
  5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
    - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
      - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
    - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

**Attachment(s)**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application                      |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                       | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),<br>Paper No./Mail Date _____. |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),<br>Paper No./Mail Date _____    | 7. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment                    |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit<br>of Biological Material | 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance              |
|  | 9. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>CLAIM SHEET</u> .                      |

### **EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT**

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mark Williamson on 9/20/2006.

The application has been amended as follows:

Replace claims 1 and 14 with the attached amended claims.

In claim 11, line 6, after "and 3 to", replace "9" with -- 8 --.

In claim 23, line 6, after "claims", replace "14-21" with -- 14-20 --.

Cancel claims 9 and 21.

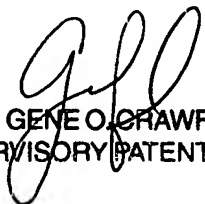
2. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Leslie A. Nicholson III whose telephone number is 571-272-5487. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F, 8:30 AM - 5 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Gene Crawford can be reached on 571-272-6911. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

L.N.  
10/17/2006

  
GENE O. CRAWFORD  
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER

CLAIM SHEET

1. A sheet processing apparatus, comprising:

sheet stacking means for stacking sheets;

sheet processing means for processing the sheets stacked on the sheet stacking means;

a sheet holding portion which stores supplied sheets while preceding sheets stacked on the sheet stacking means are processed by the sheet processing means;

sheet conveying means for conveying the sheets stored in the sheet holding portion to the sheet stacking means in a conveying direction ~~and defining upstream and downstream edges of the supplied sheets with respect to the conveying direction;~~

an abutment stopper, provided in the sheet holding portion, against which the upstream edges of the supplied sheets abut; and

moving means for moving the supplied sheets in a direction opposite to the conveying direction to abut the upstream edges thereof against the abutment stopper; and

~~wherein the supplied sheets are held~~ a holding member which holds the supplied sheets in the sheet holding portion with their upstream edges ~~aligned by moving the supplied sheets in a direction opposite to the conveying direction to abut~~ abutted against the abutment stopper until the last sheet of the sheets to be stored is supplied in the sheet holding portion, and

wherein the sheet conveying means conveys the stored sheets ~~are conveyed~~ to the sheet stacking means from the sheet holding portion ~~by the sheet conveying means~~ when a downstream edge in the conveying direction of the last sheet of the sheets to be stored has projected from the downstream edges of the sheets held in the sheet holding portion by a predetermined amount.

14. A sheet processing apparatus, comprising:
- a processing tray on which the sheets are stacked;
  - a processing unit which processes the sheets stacked on the processing tray;
  - a sheet holding portion which stores supplied sheets while preceding sheets stacked on the processing tray are processed by the processing unit;
  - a sheet discharging rotary member which conveys the supplied sheets stored in the sheet holding portion to the processing tray in a conveying direction ~~and which defines upstream and downstream edges of the supplied sheets with respect to the conveying direction;~~
  - an abutment stopper, provided in the sheet holding portion, against which the upstream edges of the supplied sheets abut; ~~and~~
  - a return roller which moves the supplied sheets in a direction opposite to the conveying direction to abut the upstream edges of the sheets against the abutment stopper; and

~~wherein the supplied sheets are held~~ a holding member which holds the supplied sheets in the sheet holding portion with their upstream edges in a conveying direction thereof ~~aligned by moving the supplied sheets in a direction opposite to the conveying direction to abut~~ abutted against the abutment stopper until the last sheet of the sheets to be stored is supplied in the sheet holding portion, ~~and~~

wherein the sheet discharging rotary member conveys the stored sheets ~~are conveyed~~ to the processing tray from the sheet holding portion ~~by the discharging rotary member~~ when a downstream edge in the conveying direction of the last sheet of the sheets

to be stored has projected from the downstream edges of the sheets held in the sheet holding portion by a predetermined amount.